

## **City of Vidalia Fire Department** **GA DCA Planning Success Story**

The City of Vidalia updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2019, “One Toombs: A Legacy of Leadership.” During its update, the plan received new life as the department heads of the city made significant contributions to the Community Work Program. Their involvement was crucial in order to have a refreshed viewpoint from the last time the Community Work program was updated in 2015. Department head involvement in day-to-day operations and desire to experience smart growth lead to their influence of the program.

Since the Community Work Program was finalized and adopted in the latter part of 2019, it has not provided many opportunities to complete tasks this early in 2020. However, one of the activities the fire department has completed is purchasing, training, and utilizing Rescue Equipment and accessories (Jaws of Life). Although this piece of equipment is not unique to Vidalia, it has already proven to be beneficial when it comes to saving lives without delay!

In the spring of 2019 as the comprehensive plan update was initiated, discussions began about obtaining this piece of equipment for the first time in the department’s history amongst city leaders and with officials from Toombs County. We knew it was important for Toombs County officials to be involved so that they recognized the importance of both entities being able to back one another up in times of need. Historically, the City of Vidalia has relied on the Toombs County Rescue Team for this service within the city limits of Vidalia. The equipment was received in January of 2020 (please see photos). Following the training (please see photos) by the fire department employees, the equipment was quickly put to use and often. Since January, our fire department has responded four calls where the Jaws of Life were utilized (one was to assist Toombs County). The response time of the four incidents has been three minutes. In the past, response times would be at least 8-9 minutes due the procedures that were necessary to operate the Toombs County’s equipment. We know that this will not only save lives in Vidalia, but also in Toombs County due to the readiness of the equipment to operate at a moment’s notice.

In the Community Work Program of the Comprehensive Plan, the purchase of the rescue equipment was included in the Community Facilities and Services and

Intergovernmental Coordination elements on page 110. Also, under the Needs and Opportunities section of the plan on page 47, it describes the following need for the City:

1. Purchase rescue equipment/accessories (Jaws of Life) for Vidalia (CFS ,IC)

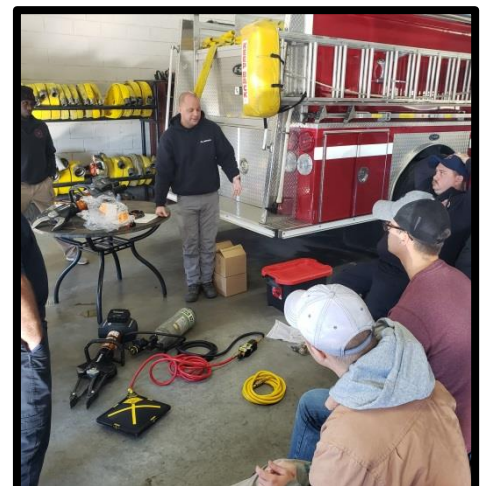
As a Long Term Policy, the City of Vidalia included the following two policies in its Comprehensive Plan:

1. The community will continue to improve public safety services, facilities, and personnel training to support an expanding population, improve quality of service, and better coordinate in times of emergency and disaster. (Page 39)
2. The community will continue to seek ways to cooperate and coordinate efforts in the delivery of services, and will investigate the possibility of shared and consolidated services where appropriate and feasible. (Page 40)

This foresight by our local officials and staff has already proven to be a true investment in the lives of our citizens in the community. There is no dollar amount that can be placed on someone's life. Our partnership that we enjoy with Toombs County will only lead to the betterment of operations that our citizens will benefit from now and into the future.

### Jaws of Life Pictures

#### Equipment



## Training

